

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MUNICIPAL COUNCILS
TOWNSHIP OF AUGUSTA
TOWNSHIP OF EDWARDSBURGH/CARDINAL
TOWN OF PRESCOTT
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, SPENCERVILLE, ONTARIO
TUESDAY, JULY 30, 2019
6:30 PM**

PRESENT:

TOWNSHIP OF EDWARDSBURGH/CARDINAL

Mayor Pat Sayeau
Deputy Mayor Tory Deschamps
Councillor Hugh Cameron
Councillor Stephen Dillabough
Councillor John Hunter

TOWNSHIP OF AUGUSTA

Mayor Doug Malanka
Deputy Mayor Jeff Shaver
Councillor Michele Bowman
Councillor Tanya Henry
Councillor Samantha Schapelhouman

TOWN OF PRESCOTT

Mayor Brett Todd
Councillor Leanne Burton
Councillor Teresa Jansman
Councillor Lee McConnell
Councillor Mike Ostrander
Councillor Gauri Shankar
Councillor Ray Young

STAFF:

Deb McKinstry, CAO, Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal
Ray Morrison, CAO, Township of Augusta
Matthew Armstrong, CAO, Town of Prescott
Kimberley Casselman, Clerk, Town of Prescott

1. Welcome and Introductions

Tony Fleming, Cunningham Swan, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Opening Statement from the Mayors

Mayor Sayeau welcomed the public in attendance and welcomed Mayor Jason Baker from the City of Brockville. He also welcomed and thanked the Council members from the Township of Augusta and the Town of Prescott for taking part in the tri-Council meeting.

Mayor Sayeau read a prepared statement on behalf of the Mayors of the three municipalities. The statement extended greetings on behalf of Mayor Malanka and Mayor Todd and spoke to the meetings that the three Mayors had been having to explore opportunities for shared services and efficiencies. Mayor Sayeau stated that the three Mayors were proposing that the municipalities embark on a service delivery review, conducted by a third-party, which would

encompass all of the municipalities. A copy of the Mayor's statement is held on file.

Each member of Council introduced themselves.

3. Report from the CAO's

Deb McKinstry, CAO, Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal, introduced the CAOs and staff in attendance – Matthew Armstrong, CAO, Town of Prescott, Ray Morrison, CAO, Township of Augusta, and Kimberley Casselman, Clerk, Town of Prescott. She also welcomed other staff in attendance including the Fire Chiefs from the three municipalities.

Ms. McKinstry provided an overview of the CAO's report. She spoke to the ongoing collaboration and cooperation of staff members amongst the three municipalities. Ms. McKinstry referenced the themes within the CAO's report which helped to focus the concept of modernization. She stated that the CAOs believed there were opportunities to standardize approaches and provide greater expertise at the same or lower cost. She spoke to the need for a governance structure to oversee the collaborations amongst the municipalities and referenced the unexpected funding received by the Provincial government, which had prompted staff and Council to take a broader look at how the municipalities do business in the region. Ms. McKinstry stated that the CAOs were excited for further collaboration amongst the three municipalities.

Tony Fleming, Chair, stated that each Councillor would have two minutes to provide their ideas. He added that the goal of the meeting was to create a list of ideas collaboratively, through each member's comments, to find efficiencies and modernize operations within the three municipalities. Mr. Fleming stated that the Mayors would take the ideas and work with their individual Councils to create a list of priorities and actions with the goal of working collaboratively as three municipalities to find efficiencies.

4. Ideas from Councillors

a) Michele Bowman

Councillor Bowman thanked those in attendance and stated that her view was that this meeting was the first stepping stone for the future. She stated that consultants should be hired to look at all of the areas that the municipalities were looking to collaborate on to determine what may or may not work. Councillor Bowman added that the managers of the three municipalities also needed to be involved and that other municipalities should be consulted to find best practices.

b) Leanne Burton

Councillor Burton stated that tourism was all about partnerships and needed to be boosted by planning bigger events to capitalize on the waterfront. She spoke to healthcare and the possibility of providing a South Grenville clinic in a central location. Councillor Burton spoke to the Town of Prescott needing a new community centre and stated that the three municipalities could collaborate on this and that it could be located close to Aquaworld. Councillor Burton spoke to soccer in Prescott and the idea of creating a recreational hub in the area. She stated that the municipalities should not be afraid of amalgamation to create financial savings and opportunities for growth.

c) Hugh Cameron

Councillor Cameron introduced himself and stated that the three Councils were at the meeting to give input to the municipal modernization exercise. He stated that Council members had been challenged to find the ways and means to reduce costs. Councillor Cameron spoke to collaboration laying the groundwork for a working formula to meet the challenge of reducing costs and making hard decisions. He added that two minutes did not allow for detailed ideas and that some of his thoughts might require staff implications and closed session discussions. He added that Mayor Sayeau was well aware that he would bring forward these issues at the proper time and place. Councillor Cameron stated some areas that could be addressed were the use of electronic equipment, department heads using the most efficient methods and work plans, fire services, police services, waste collection, economic development, regional planning, cooperative purchasing for all departments, computer software, department and employee sharing, in-house efficiencies in all departments, facility and equipment sharing, and the contracting of certain services.

d) Tory Deschamps

Deputy Mayor Deschamps welcomed fellow Council members, staff, and the public. He thanked Mr. Fleming for chairing the meeting. Deputy Mayor Deschamps stated that his sole focus was on recreation, as he believed it was something that could be achieved as a group. He spoke to replacing Prescott's arena with a modern, new recreation centre which would be a perfect beginning to a multi-municipal partnership. He added that this project would open the door to further collaborative efforts and one day an amalgamated Township of South Grenville. He spoke to further cooperation with the Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley and the City of Brockville for collaborative planning and funding to build a complex that would meet the needs of residents. Mayor Deschamps stated that replacing the Leo Boivin Community Centre with a state of the art, modern, twin pad arena and community centre would address the need for an arena and benefit all ratepayers by making good use of existing funds and budgets, as well as preparing for the replacement of other outdated facilities.

e) Steve Dillabough

Councillor Dillabough introduced himself and stated that as a Councillor there were certain areas of concern that had his attention including the continuing expectation from citizens for services, aging infrastructure, and economic development competition in the area. Councillor Dillabough stated it was time to start working together to be proactive and creative in problem solving. He stated that the municipalities needed to change how they did business especially decisions regarding replacing equipment, services, operations, costs, and even human resources. Councillor Dillabough spoke to equipment sharing or looking at rentals, having services, such as recreation or libraries, available in full capacity in one area instead of half of the time in all areas. He spoke to buying supplies, such as fuel, in volume and negotiating a better price, looking at staff resources and what could be shared, and talking to neighbours to see what they have and eliminate duplicate service delivery. Councillor Dillabough stated the public needed to be a big part of the process and that good communication was critical.

f) Tanya Henry

Councillor Henry stated that her ideas included waste management issues, in particular plastics, affordable high-speed internet in all areas, a joint effort in operations, an increased joint effort in bringing economic development to the area, sharing of equipment and staff to service equipment, and fire department needs including combined efforts and savings.

g) John Hunter

Councillor Hunter introduced himself and stated that cooperation amongst the municipalities was key and that previous efforts to work together had not been met with a good reception. Councillor Hunter stated that some departments could easily work together including fire departments, building and licensing departments, along with offering more online services such as permits. He stated that internet connection needed to be improved, that CAOs could work more cooperatively together, and that by-laws could be coordinated. Councillor Hunter spoke to the Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal carrying a big recreation load. He stated that there was a need for more equalized pay amongst the municipalities on how residents pay for their recreation. Councillor Hunter stated that there was a consensus to move forward and stated that the departments needed to work together on a cooperative basis with far more use of staff and things being done less out of house. He referenced the possibility of having a higher skilled building inspector working for the three municipalities. Councillor Hunter stated that he was for working together, but against amalgamation.

h) Teresa Jansman

Councillor Jansman spoke to the CAO's report. She stated that it was well thought out, that the themes within it were a useful tool, and that the administration and operations section pointed out the work that has been done to date in terms of collaboration. She spoke to the opportunities to explore that were mentioned in the report such as combining purchasing power, sharing services and staff, and asset management. Councillor Jansman added that these opportunities were exciting and areas that could be kept at the CAO level to explore, plan, and manage. Councillor Jansman referenced the quality of life section in the CAO's report and stated that she believed that elected officials had a role to institute a permanent and constant way of thinking each time a decision was being considered and debated to ensure that the discussion had a regional lens. She added that with this mindset, the sections of the report pertaining to governance and economic development would naturally follow suit.

i) Lee McConnell

Councillor McConnell thanked Mayor Sayeau and the Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal for proposing the meeting, which was long overdue in his opinion. He spoke to the Provincial government funding for shared services and capital investment, which he stated worked to the advantage of Prescott and its taxpayers. Councillor McConnell also stated that what concerned him was that the municipality might end up spending more on negotiating agreements and administrating the shared services than would be saved. He stated that if the municipalities were to share services, equipment, and facilities, it would be imperative that agreements be made first. Councillor McConnell referenced that the Town of Prescott was in the planning stages of a new rink and that 80% of the users of the Prescott rink were from out of town. He stated that the new rink, like the old, will be a truly shared facility and that he believed the cost of construction, as well as operations, should be shared and that the two contributing townships should have a say in the planning stage. Councillor McConnell added that this was an agreement that needed to be worked out before the design was finalized and before construction. He spoke to Prescott's new fire hall and that the Prescott Fire Department was a significant responder to the other townships, but that the entire cost of building and maintaining the facility and department rested on the shoulders of Prescott taxpayers. Councillor McConnell referenced the fire services agreement and stated that it did not come close to compensating the service provided. He added that serious negotiations needed to be had and that now was the time to do it.

j) Mike Ostrander

Councillor Ostrander thanked the Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal for hosting the meeting and stated that it was long overdue. He spoke to the Town of Prescott's Recreation Master Plan, which he stated was impressed with what the Town was doing and impressed with its neighbouring municipalities with a similar shoreline. Councillor Ostrander spoke to the on-going process for a new rink in Prescott and for the need to establish some sort of cooperation. He spoke to the Recreation Master Plan stating that a large percentage of rink users come from outside of Prescott. He also spoke to the three fire departments and stated that it seemed when a shovel went in the ground for a new building, that amalgamating fire departments came to the forefront, but would then die down. He stated that an amalgamation of some sort may happen sooner than later and spoke to challenges faced by fire departments. Councillor Ostrander referenced the proximity of the municipalities in relation to two 400 series highways and a bridge to the United States. He stated that the municipalities should build on that and congratulated the Township of Augusta on a recent sale of land and the Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal on recent land developments.

k) Samantha Schapelhouman

Councillor Schapelhouman thanked her Council colleagues for the invitation to be at the meeting and thanked the CAOs for their report. She stated that the CAO's report helped her to understand why the Provincial funding was given and what the municipalities should be focused on. Councillor Schapelhouman stated that the idea she settled on was libraries, which she felt were becoming harder to maintain. She stated that libraries were struggling with new technology, being able to offer certain services to residents, having to update equipment, and internet access. Councillor Schapelhouman referenced upcoming events at the Prescott Public Library, spoke to other services that municipalities offered, and stated that libraries were still needed. She added that taking a look at a focused area might be a good idea.

l) Gauri Shankar

Councillor Shankar thanked the Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal for hosting the meeting, the three Mayors for making the meeting possible, and everyone in attendance. He stated that a lot of great ideas had been said, but that the three key words he had heard were cooperation, collaboration, and perhaps amalgamation. He stated that cooperation was in the room and that a service delivery review was a great idea for each individual municipality to find savings such as shared services in areas like roads and operations, recreation, and tourism. Councillor Shankar stated tourism could be a coordinated effort along with economic development for the whole area. He stated that the municipalities had invisible boundaries and that they were all the same and together. Councillor Shankar spoke to the good quality of life in the area and referenced the St. Lawrence River and history and heritage. He stated that the municipalities should work together to create more savings and provide more for taxpayers, and that one municipality's gain was everyone's gain.

m) Jeff Shaver

Deputy Mayor Shaver stated that modernization was the process of adapting something to modern needs or habits and that in all of the municipal cases, it was providing better service to the public with less financial demand and support from the government. He stated that they must be realistic with what was chosen moving forward and that as elected members of Council they would have to ensure their first steps in the process were winners and made good sense financially and to residents. Deputy Mayor Shaver referenced the CAO's report and the themes within it as being a good starting point. He spoke to the CAO's proposals of establishing contracts with preferred vendors for equipment and maintenance, standardizing services, implementing full-time positions and eliminating part-time employment, sharing information electronically, departmental collaboration, and monitoring the shared activities to

ensure continued savings. Deputy Mayor Shaver stated that he recommended that the municipalities begin this work, leaving it up to the CAOs to gradually implement what they had suggested on a one year trial basis with a year-end report stating service and financial proof.

n) Ray Young

Councillor Young stated that he urged the municipalities to move forward with the easier ideas presented. He stated that if the municipalities got a few easy ideas working, it would build confidence amongst residents and bring the three Councils together with more trust and cooperation. Councillor Young praised the Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal for the draining the swamp on the north side of highway 401. He stated that if flooding was eliminated in that area, it would help the sale of the property on the northeast corner of Prescott's intersection, would help the sale of the property north of the industrial park, which could become residential, and would also help Prescott's high water in its northeast quadrant. Councillor Young added that the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville had a stake in this flooding in relation to updating their housing units in the area and that all of the municipalities would benefit from the draining.

Mr. Fleming thanked the Council members for presenting their ideas.

5. Closing Statement from the Mayors

Mayor Sayeau stated that he appreciated the opportunity to hear the ideas from Councillors from other municipalities to get a feeling for what might be politically possible. He stated that he had made extensive notes and that the next time the Mayors met, he would have them with him. Mayor Sayeau added that he was heavily influenced by a number of comments that spoke to starting with simple ideas and build confidence that the municipalities can work together.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.